

REMARKS

The above amendments have been made to incorporate the subject matter of several dependent claims into the independent claims in order to further define the invention over the prior art. Specifically, dependent claims 19, 25 and 29 have been amended to recite that the first edge portion of an adjoining third sheathing element can engage *both* the second edge portion of the sheathing element and the second edge portion of the adjoining second sheathing element. Then, the subject matter of these dependent claims has been incorporated into independent claims 18, 24 and 28, respectively, and these dependent claims have been cancelled.

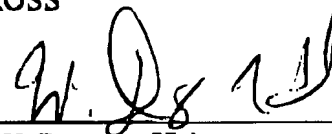
In addition, independent claim 24 has been amended to further describe the structure of the mounting tab. Finally, independent claim 28 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of dependent claim 30, so that independent claim 28 now recites that the mounting tab projects from only a section of the second edge portion so as to form an overlapping section. For the Examiner's benefit, a marked-up copy of the claims showing the changes entitled "Version with markings to show changes made", is attached.

It is submitted that these amendments do not affect the reasons for patentability set forth in the remarks section of the response filed on January 19, 2001 and, thus, those remarks are still applicable. Moreover, it is submitted that these amendments further define the present invention so as to provide additional distinctions between the present invention and the prior art. Accordingly, it is again respectfully submitted that independent claims 18, 24 and 28, and the claims that depend therefrom, are clearly patentable over the prior art of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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